



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1376.0 - Local Government and ABS (Newsletter), Jun 2005

Previous ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 01/07/2005

In this issue:

- About this newsletter
- ABS electronic publications are now available for free
- How fast is the population of your region growing?
- New information about the operations of local government libraries
- What's happening in Local Government Finance?
- New award encourages libraries to increase awareness of ABS services
- Links to previous editions of Local Government and ABS
- Newsletter contact details

About this newsletter

Local Government and ABS is a quarterly newsletter created by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) aimed at helping the Local Government Sector use statistics to assist with planning and other community servicing decisions.

The specific aims of this newsletter are to:

- Help you easily find information on the ABS website and explain the structure of the ABS website;
- Provide direct electronic links to statistical series of use to local government. Electronic links are coloured and underlined and can be activated using the mouse button;
- Explain statistical terms to help make sense of more complex data;
- Provide a central contact point where you can provide your views and suggestions as to how the ABS can better assist local government.

This is a free newsletter and we encourage you to forward it to others and post it on your bulletin board. Anyone is welcome to receive Local Government and ABS.

To subscribe:

send an email to rex.porter@abs.gov.au with "subscribe Local Government and ABS" in the subject line.

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter:

send an email to rex.porter@abs.gov.au with "unsubscribe Local Government and ABS" in the subject line.

To find this newsletter on the ABS Website:

- Select **News and Media** from the main menu at the top or bottom of the screen.
- At the next page choose **ABS Newsletters**.
- Then choose the appropriate edition under **Local Government and ABS**.

[Back to top](#)

ABS electronic publications are now available for free

The free content on the ABS website has been limited to "Main Features" for most statistical releases. To improve the availability of data to the community, from 1 July the range of free content on the ABS web site has been expanded to include:

- electronic publications (PDF and HTML based content);
- electronic "publication tables", ie tables in spreadsheet or data-cube format which otherwise would have been included in a printed/PDF publication; and in particular
- electronic State/Territory "publication tables" that complement national "publication tables".

You can access ABS publications through the AusStats home page.

For further information, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

[Back to top](#)

How fast is the population of your region growing?

The ABS has recently released new estimates of the population and growth rates for regions throughout Australia. The estimates are for Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) and Local Government Areas (LGAs) and higher levels.

This is included in the publication **Regional Population Growth, Australia and New Zealand, 2003-04 (cat 3218.0)**.

The data in the publication include:

- estimates of the population at 30 June 2004 (preliminary estimates), 30 June 2003 (revised estimates) and 30 June 1999 (final estimates);
- percentage changes from 1999 to 2004 and from 2003 to 2004;
- rankings of Local Government Areas by their population growth.

The **main features** of this publication are available. In addition, population estimates at 30 June 2004 for LGAs in each state are also available from these links:

New South Wales

Victoria

Queensland

South Australia

Western Australia

Tasmania

Northern Territory

Australian Capital Territory

For more information, please contact Matthew Montgomery on (02) 6252 6487, or by email : matthew.montgomery@abs.gov.au

[Back to top](#)

New information about the operations of local government libraries

The ABS has recently released a publication **Public Libraries 2003-04 (8561.0)** which contains information about local government libraries.

The publication presents results from an ABS survey of public library operations for the 2003-04 financial year. Previous collections were conducted in respect of 1999-2000 and 1996-97 financial years.

The key results from this survey include:

- At the end of June 2004 there were 10,606 persons employed by 532 local government library organisations operating from 1,716 locations throughout Australia. ;
- Local government libraries incurred expenses of \$545.2 million during 2003-04. The main contributor to total expenses was labour costs at \$340.8m;
- Local government libraries had a combined income of \$545.2 million during 2003-04. Most of this income (95.7% or \$521.9 million) came from government funding. The main source of government

funding was local government allocations at \$415.2 million (76.2% of total income). Services to clients contributed 3.4% (\$18.3 million) and fundraising 0.2% (\$1.3 million).

- In 2003-04 there were 99.6 million visits to local government libraries which represents an average of 5 visits per year per head of population. These visitors were attracted to the local government library holdings of 41.5 million books and other library materials.

For further information, please contact William Milne by phone on (03) 9615 7862, or by email: william.milne@abs.gov.au

[Back to top](#)

What's happening in Local Government Finance?

Collections

The forms for our Local Government Finance Statistics, Quarterly Estimates for the June Quarter 2005 have been sent out to selected councils on 16 June 2005. Responses to the **quarterly** survey are required by 12 July 2005. A prompt response would be appreciated to ensure the financial activity of local government is accurately represented in Australia's National Accounts which are prepared on a quarterly basis. As always ABS personnel are available to assist councils in completing the form in situations where requirements are unclear.

The ABS' Local Government Statistics Unit (LGSU) data from the **annual** 2003-04 Local Government Finance Collection were published on 15 April 2005. The publication, **Government Finance Statistics, Australia (Cat No.5512.0)**, is available through the AusStats home page.

Visits to Departments of Local Government and Grants Commissions

By the end of June, staff from LGSU would have met with most of the state/territory Grants Commissions or Departments of Local Government to review the completed 2002-03 annual collection and to discuss developments for its 2004-05 cycle. As usual, the discussions were constructive and invaluable in strengthening relationships. Some of the issues discussed were timetables, data quality and improvements to the collection forms and related processes. Work is underway in updating all systems ready for the first despatch which might be as early as mid-July.

Other Developments

The Local Government Statistics Unit has recommenced work on the development of an Information Development Plan (IDP). Data sources available in the field of Local Government statistics have been investigated and some preliminary work on scoping the IDP has been conducted. Consultations are planned with key stakeholders in the Local Government sector to discuss local government issues and further define the Local Government field of statistics.

Work is proceeding on the development of a definitive list of local government units which will form the basis of all ABS surveys undertaken within the sector. It is expected that such a list will also be an invaluable tool for researchers and analysts within the field of local government.

Preparations are also well advanced for the publishing of a Local Government Purpose Classification (LGPC). The LGPC will form a key element in an ABS strategy to enable local government units to report on their activities on a basis that is both extremely relevant for them and standardised nationally.

Contacts

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[Back to top](#)

New award encourages libraries to increase awareness of ABS services

A new ABS Award, the LEP (Library Extension Program) Excellence Award, recognises and rewards libraries for excellence in raising their communities' awareness, understanding and use of ABS information.

The prize is a trophy and \$1500 worth of ABS products/services of the winner's choice, including Information and Statistical Consultancies.

Entries for this year close on 31 July 2005.

For more information about this exciting new award visit the **LEP Award page** on the ABS web site.

[Back to top](#)

Links to previous issues of Local Government and ABS

Local Government and ABS Issue 9 March 2005
Local Government and ABS Issue 8 December 2004
Local Government and ABS Issue 7 September 2004
Local Government and ABS Issue 6 June 2004
Local Government and ABS Issue 5 March 2004
Local Government and ABS Issue 4 December 2003
Local Government and ABS Issue 3 September 2003
Local Government and ABS Issue 2 June 2003
Local Government and ABS Issue 1 March 2003

Newsletter contact details

This newsletter is one way to help improve communication between the ABS and the Local Government Sector. New ABS initiatives to assist local government organisations will be announced in this newsletter as they evolve. We would like your views and suggestions about this newsletter so that it remains useful and assists you to understand and use ABS statistics. Please email comments to rex.porter@abs.gov.au, or by telephone on (08) 8237 7416.

This page last updated 5 April 2007

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